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be demonstrated by guinea pig tests which have been previously explained.* Consequently, guinea pigs were inoculated with the cultures not only from Susie Smith, but from Sammy Jones and Roy Smith. The guinea pigs died in less than 24 hours, showing at autopsy typical pictures of diphtheria toxemia. Miss J. now has proof where Sammy Jones and Roy Smith contracted diphtheria, in the Bacteriologist's report, "Susie Smith, throat culture pathogenic for guinea pig." This is only one of many instances in which the virulence test is essential to the proper control of diphtheria.

Another interesting report from the files of the Bacteriologists is the case of a certain Miss Brown. In culturing the throats of a hospital staff for the source of a diphtheria outbreak in the children's ward, Miss Brown, a nurse, was found to carry diphtheria-like organisms in her throat. Miss Brown was put in isolation on the suspicion of being a carrier. Guinea pig inoculated five days ago with a culture from the throat of Miss Brown is active and normal today. The guinea pig demonstrates that the organism was not pathogenic, thereby relieving Miss Brown of any responsibility of the cause of the outbreak.

THE PRIVATE DUTY NURSE

BY A PRIVATE DUTY NURSE

Boston, Mass.

IF we are to go forward, one of the points that must be attained is complete coöperation among all branches of our profession. There has been much publicity recently in our *Journal* derogatory to the private duty nurse, and it is our purpose in this article to show the unjustness of these criticisms and to demonstrate the true value and worth of the private duty nurse to our profession.

Let us discuss briefly the status of the nursing profession in general so we may show that in the private nurse's field lies the solution of many of our present day problems. It has been said, "mediocrity freezes desire," and "equality engenders uniformity." One hesitates and wonders, when viewing the general situation, that a great many, if not all, are quite mediocre in that they do not truly represent the value of their particular chosen field. Why does such a state of affairs exist? The answer may possibly be found in the second statement, "equality engenders uniformity." We are often far too prone to let well enough alone, especially if the blazing of the trail day by day proves equal or no more difficult to us than it has

* See *Journal*, June, 1922.

previously. Does this not present a tendency toward a monotonous uniformity which inevitably leads to certain stagnation and brings us to the danger brink of the "abominable rut"? From Miss Nightingale we read, "Our nursing is a thing, which, unless in it we are making progress every year, every month, every week, take my word for it, we are going back."

But I do not foster the idea for a moment that nursing is going back. Rooted in the noble instinct, founded in the alleviation of human pain and need; so immense that it not only offers opportunity to the self effacing, but phenomenal opportunities to the young woman whose desire for self expression can be satisfied in the great work for human need.

Let us compare for a moment our two oldest fields, the private duty and the institutional. Which do you think presents the greatest danger to our profession? In one picture we have the private duty worker at the bedside with a most delicate piece of human machinery entrusted to her care. In another we perhaps have a head nurse or supervisor of a ward of thirty or forty of exactly such self-same, broken down pieces of humanity, who are looking for, and deserving of, the best that we can give. Who holds in her power the opportunity to exercise those great ideals which are our stronghold? The institutional worker is indeed a great necessity, but—alas—her opportunities for self-expression of the same are ever overcome, smothered, blindfolded by the two greatest enemies that lurk in our pathway, i. e., "monotonous uniformity," and "institutional mechanism." It is the private duty nurse, working as an individual, who possesses unlimited opportunities to rid us of such dangers and elevate those principles which standardize our profession and make of it "the finest of fine arts."

In our present day there is evidence of a growing impression in the minds of our young nurses leaving, or about to leave, our training schools that the field of private nursing is on somewhat of a lower plane. Just why? The predisposing cause may possibly be of a "hereditary nature"—handed down to her gradually and perhaps unknowingly during her training because of the same absurd idea that smoulders in the minds of some well known nurses. If you have such an impression let me warn you, you are on the wrong trail. Your teachings, your trainings have been a failure, you have lost sight of the star that inspired and guided our noble leader, Florence Nightingale.

The self effacing woman engaged in the private duty field is doing one of the noblest of God's works. Let us prove worthy of those whose words have instructed, whose examples have encouraged,

whose ideals have inspired us with the love of truth and lofty aspirations, and pass on the same torch to those who follow us. "The golden age lies not in the past, but in the future." To each and every private duty nurse I say you are face to face with difficulties. But are not difficulties meant to rouse rather than discourage? Does not this stress bring forth more intense patriotism and loyalty? You cannot afford to lower the torch that has been entrusted to you. I ask you, have you done, or are you doing all you can to help the situation? What of the private duty sections? In our opinion they reveal the only solution to better conditions. In the installation of organized sections or institutes, where the private worker can find coöperation by means of well organized and constructive procedures upheld by the force of collective opinion, lies the hope of showing those, who would be unsparing in their misjudgment, her true value to the profession.

To you, who are just graduating and who are about to enter upon your life work, what are you anticipating? In view of the fact that higher education for the nurse is being constantly installed in our training schools, you are being called to many different fields; but I would urge you, especially you who are contemplating institutional work, to turn your first steps toward the private duty field. It gives one a broader understanding, endowing one with that altruistic spirit which makes us ever mindful that our patient is but a fellow creature in pain. You will find that the personal contact with the various patients, under various circumstances and conditions, will develop in you that understanding, that tact, that self-reliance, self-sacrifice, together with the full realization of the highest ideals and principles which pave the pathway of our profession. You will then have builded a big defence against the institutional worker's greatest enemy,—mechanism.

You who are starting out upon your career, I would urge particularly to do private duty work. It is much worth while, so much that I urge you to plan accordingly. Raise high your banner and say to those who may need to call you, "you will find us where the dust and din are thickest." Let us remember the great public is looking to us for help. It is for us the task to usher in—

"The day in the future,
When truth shall not care
For the symbol of power,
Or the trappings men wear;
When the world and the order,
The mantle and mart,
Shall each but do service
For spirit and heart."